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COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY CRISIS DEEPENS FAMILIES SEEK NEW WAYS TO FIND THE BEST COLLEGE DEAL

Innovative StudentAid.com service transforms college planning

SACRAMENTO, CA – SEPT. 22, 2009 – StudentAid.com today introduces a breakthrough service that for the first time allows families to compare out-of-pocket costs before applying to college and avoid suffocating debt. The service calculates aid eligibility to help students and families understand their true net costs and find the best college deal possible.

“Families have been deprived of, yet desperately need, insight into their out-of-pocket college costs to ensure when choosing a college, they make a smart choice academically and financially,” said Craig V. Carroll, StudentAid.com founder and chief executive officer. “Our service demystifies college costs and empowers students and families with comparative information to give them early insight into how to plan and pay for college.”

Government-backed student loans have skyrocketed this year 21% to a record \$95 billion, according to the U.S. Department of Education – the largest increase in history. Vice President Joe Biden’s *White House Task Force on Middle Income Families* shows that a public four-year college costs a middle-income family 16% of its after-tax income after receiving the typical aid award.

To help students find colleges that fit their career goals *and* the family bank account, StudentAid.com has created the [College Cost & Planning Report™](#), a report personalized for each student’s academic and financial circumstances and the specific colleges they are interested in attending. Each report:

- Assesses an individual student's eligibility for in excess of \$100 billion of student aid
- Evaluates their out-of-pocket costs at more than 6,500 colleges
- Provides detailed comparative data on college choices so students can easily compare colleges

Using StudentAid's easy \$49 online, self-serve method or \$99 advisor-assisted telephone service, a student can receive a custom report showing a side-by-side comparison of their true out-of-pocket cost and aid eligibility amounts at up to 10 colleges of interest.

***Access for All*[™] Provides Free College Planning to Low-Income Students**

To promote greater college access, StudentAid.com is offering students, whose household income is less than \$40,000, a free, personalized [*College Cost & Planning Report*[™]](#) comparing six colleges of their choice.

"We believe everyone with the desire and capability should have the opportunity of an affordable, advanced education regardless of their financial situation," Carroll said. "We hope our [*Access for All*[™]](#) offer inspires the millions of students needing financial aid that an affordable college education is within their reach."

As part of its drive to improve college access, USA Funds, the nation's largest student loan guarantor, is helping make StudentAid.com's [*Access for All*[™]](#) program possible.

"Higher education is one of the most important and largest investments families make," said Bob Ballard, USA Funds' senior vice president of program and corporate development. "Unfortunately, many families select a college or university based on an incomplete picture of their out-of-pocket costs. Consistent with USA Funds' nonprofit mission of support for post-secondary education, our participation in [*Access for All*[™]](#) enhances our efforts to help every deserving student gain the greatest benefit from higher education."

StudentAid.com's Web site also offers a free peer-to-peer college suggestion service, the first of its kind. [*College Suggestor*[™]](#) uses the *actual* college choices and collective wisdom of more than 600,000 students to suggest colleges that may be of interest. A student simply enters the name of a college and can learn about additional colleges most commonly considered by other students who were also interested in the same college. Students can view profiles of the suggested colleges, access contact information, email college ideas to friends, and select colleges to be compared by their [*College Cost & Planning Report*[™]](#).

About StudentAid.com

StudentAid.com, Inc. provides the first personalized, side-by-side comparison of the net costs of college and student aid eligibility to help students and their families choose colleges that fit their career goals and bank account, years before applying.

StudentAid.com is a private company headquartered in Sacramento, CA.

www.studentaid.com

About USA Funds®

USA Funds® is a nonprofit corporation that works to enhance postsecondary education preparedness, access, and success by providing and supporting financial and other valued services. USA Funds links colleges, universities, private career schools, private lenders, students, and parents to promote financial access to higher learning.

Established in Indianapolis in 1960 to help families finance rising college costs, USA Funds has grown to become the nation's largest guarantor of loans made under the Federal Family Education Loan Program, the largest federal source of financial aid for higher education.

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